



Branch Standard The Blessing of the new Standard has taken place and George Fleming thanked Members who were able to attend the Church Service at short notice.

Donation Received St Peter's Lodge has donated £300 to the Branch. The money, which has been gratefully acknowledged, will go towards the cost of a new flagpole in the Memorial Gardens.

Coffee Morning Many thanks to all those who helped, donated and supported our efforts to raise £284.23. A special thank you to both the Army and Air Training Corps Cadets who were a great help on the day. Mike Middleton generously donated all the coffee, tea, milk and biscuits served.

A Naval Encounter Saturday 24th June is the date of a Wine and Cheese Evening at 26 Lubenham Hill, Market Harborough. Organised by the Royal Naval Association, the event is timed for 7 until 9.30. Admission is £3, which includes two glasses of wine.

A Trip to the National Arboretum Join us for a grand day out on Tuesday 23 May. The coach trip will cost about £7 per head, provided all 33 seats are sold. Therefore, the fewer passengers there are, the higher the fare will be. So far the numbers are encouraging, so please book your place now. There is a café and a picnic area if you enjoy the outdoor life! For those who have a problem walking around, there are wheelchair facilities. Just let Pat or Glenys know and they will try and arrange the assistance you need.

The Anniversary Dinner The occasion was much enjoyed by all and, once more, many thanks to all who helped or donated in any way to make it another successful evening. The raffle raised £124, with the kind help of John Cox and the Desborough Branch. There were also two auctions when a Travelsphere voucher donated by Betty Monk raised £50, and the half-lamb from John and Pat Walker went for £35 - making a grand total of £209.

Welcome New Members Christine and Dean Baird were introduced at the Branch meeting. They bring our membership to 135.

Good News! It is a pleasure to report that Brian Marshall has been discharged from hospital following his accident and he may be contacted at home on any youth matters.



The Diary

SOME DATES TO KEEP FREE

- 20 May Poppy Appeal Ceremony - Noon at Conservative Club
- 23 May Branch Trip to National Arboretum
- 24 Jun RNA Wine & Cheese Evening
- 27 Jun National Veterans' Day (Involvement under discussion)
- 19 Aug RNA Coffee Morning - Harborough Theatre 9am
- 28 Oct M H Branch Coffee Morning - Harborough Theatre 9am
- 9 Dec RNA Christmas Dance Conservative Club 8pm - £6

For details of the Royal Naval Association events, please call Mike Middleton on MH 445827.

If you would like to attend an event but have no transport, please telephone Vida or Betty (see front cover) and every effort will be made to help you.

The date of the next meeting is May 10th

Branch meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the downstairs Function Room at the Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough.

The Committee meets in the same room on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.00 pm .



The Royal British Legion

Market Harborough Branch

Reg. Charity 219279

www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net

In Touch

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In Touch on-line
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The Meaning of Life - Explained at Last!

On the first day, God created the dog and said: "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. • For this, I will give you a life span of twenty years."

The dog said: "That's a long time to be barking. • How about only ten years and I'll give you back the other ten?" So God agreed.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said: "Entertain people, do tricks, and make them laugh. For this, I'll give you a twenty-year life span."

The monkey said: "Monkey tricks for twenty years? That's a pretty long time to perform. • How about I give you back ten like the dog did?" And God agreed.

On the third day, God created the cow and said: "You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves, and give milk to support the farmer's family. • For this, I will give you a life span of sixty years."

The cow said: "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. • How about twenty and I'll give back the other forty?" And God agreed again.

On the fourth day, God created man and said: "Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. • For this, I'll give you twenty years."

But man said: "Only twenty years? • Could you possibly give me my twenty, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back; that makes eighty, okay?"

"Okay," said God, "You asked for it."

So that is why for the first twenty years we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves.

For the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family.

For the next ten years, we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren.

And for the last ten years, we sit in our favourite armchair and bark at everyone.

Life has now been explained to you.

Bernard's Hamilcar Arrives by Post!



Captain Bernard Halsall MC piloted this Hamilcar glider to a landing near a village in Belgium. The occasion was witnessed and well-remembered by Bral Leo, a young boy at the time. A couple of years ago, Bral made contact with the Branch through our web site on the Internet and later Bernard was invited to visit the village.



This painting of the scene has now been issued as an airmail postage stamp.

Continued from previous page.

interesting things – animals, trees, flowers etc etc. Here I saw the first rubber tree I have seen. Then we went back to the boat and were sailing for nearly an hour while the sun was setting. It is really glorious. Then back to the Hotel and when we had cleaned up a little, it was time for dinner after which we take a walk through the Esbekier Gardens and round the city until about 10pm, then get to bed which I must do now or I shall not get up as fresh as I ought. No doubt you are already there.

Good Night once again

Holley xxxxxxxxxx

The Perfect Way to Spend a Summer Evening

Here's a wonderful opportunity to get together with friends to enjoy a summer evening of musical entertainment in a lovely setting.

The following is extracted from a letter received from Howard Ketton, Chairman of the Quorn Branch of the Royal British Legion.

This is the 85th year since the inception of the Royal British Legion and 70 years since the formation of the Quorn Branch, so we have a lot to celebrate at our annual concert on 15th July at Beaumanor. We have once more retained the services of the Heart of England Orchestra under its musical director and principal conductor, Paul Hilliam. By popular demand, Diana Sharp will again be our soloist and the Leicestershire and Rutland Pipe Band will be adding to the occasion with their unique contribution. We have also invited the 80-strong Nottingham-based Carlton Male Voice Choir, who, under the baton of Terry Moore, are considered by many to be the best Male Voice Choir in the East Midlands. As well as singing some of their own repertoire, we are hoping they will combine with the Heart of England Orchestra in performing some popular opera choruses.

So, with excellent music, a firework finale and the ever popular Spitfire Aerial Display, it promises to be a wonderful evening.

All it needs now is your support! So we hope you will book as soon as possible and make it known to your friends.

The performance begins at 7.15pm and will last until about 10.20. The concert takes place in the open-air and, as there is no seating available, please take chairs, cushions, rugs, umbrellas, etc., and arrive early to reserve your space. Admission from 5.0pm. Accommodation is limited, so advance booking is advised.

Tickets ordered before 30 June cost £16 and are available from Jackie Towers, 71 Melton Road, Barrow-upon-Soar, LE12 8NS, telephone 01509 416070.

Letter from Egypt A Soldier Writing Home in 1916

Tom Ashmore's father, Holley, was born in 1896 in Bluntisham, a village near St Ives.

He served in the Middle East during the First World War as an ambulance driver with the 29th Divisional FAWU. He wrote to Mabel, who corresponded with several boys from the Baptist Chapel, having been introduced by his sister, who also attended the Chapel. Mabel, who as in service with a local farmer, was the eldest daughter of Frederick Barrett of Chatteris, manager of a small fenland farm. Mabel and Holley were later married.

We continue his fascinating account of four days leave spent in Cairo in September 1916.

Dear Mabel

Now for a little about our doings the second day (Wednesday). We get up at 7am and have breakfast at 8am on the verandah. Then we meet our guide and take a gharry to the Egyptian Museum which is a huge place and is valued at £25,000,000. We found it very interesting but very tiring. I think it would take a month to go round and take notice of everything there. We went right round looking at most things and only stopping to examine those that interested us most and it took three hours. I took two photos inside and bought a guidebook which will explain that which I cannot in this letter. It would fill a large book to write fully what we saw alone. Then from there we went by train to one of the hospitals to see some



of the boys on the ambulances there, then back to the Hotel for lunch.

After lunch we rested for a while then went down to the Nile. First we came to Kaso-el-Nil Bridge, a very fine bridge across the Nile with two huge figures of a lion at each end. These are in bronze. Then we went down to the boats and hired a sailing boat to take us down the river. It was a very nice boat, clean and comfortable and the scenery round about was charming. We sailed along for a time thoroughly at our ease thinking and saying that the only thing which could possibly add to the beauty and pleasure of the trip was the girl in my case and the wife for my friend. The currents were very strong and the water very dirty but the boatmen drank it. We passed the house where Lord Kitchener lived, also the Sultan's houseboat and Cooks tourists' boats and lots of others.



We came to another bridge and the large boat would not go under so we have to be rowed through but it is very hard work for the men against the stream. A great boat comes along at great speed under full sail and a line was thrown on to it and it towed us down past Roda Island. I should have said we saw the boats all going through this bridge. It is only opened from 4 – 4.30. It was a fine sight and I tried to get a photo of it. Now the large boat leaves us and we row across past Roda Island [and] saw the first measure of the Nile made by Mohamed Ali, the 1st Khad-ive of Egypt in 11AD. The water was 35ft deep. Then we came round past the place where the daughter of Pharaoh found Moses. I tried to get a photo of it. Then we came back to the Isis. The stream brought us back. We sailed back to [Gizeh] and stopped at the Zoological Gardens. We went round and spent about 2½ hours and saw many



The Poppy Appeal 2005/2006

Dougie McMeeken, Appeal Organiser
01858 463203

The total for the current appeal is in excess of £20,600, nearly £1,000 over last year's total.

Please make every effort to attend on 20 May (see Diary) to show appreciation to those volunteers who have done so much for the Appeal.



**Calling
All
Modellers**

Are you a dab hand at constructing plastic model kits? If so, Branch Member, Rose Dann, would like to hear from you.

Rose's late husband was a keen modeller and she has an Airfix warship which he was unable to build. She would like to make it herself but, regrettably, this is not possible as her sight is failing. If you feel able to help, please call Rose on Market Harborough 432334.

A Wartime Smile

I spotted this cut-away drawing of an Anderson shelter on the Internet. I was intrigued as to why the artist had drawn only the mother wearing a gas mask. Then this caption occurred to me!



"Well, that's the last time I give you kids baked beans for tea."



From left - Pam England, George and Kwan-Yee Fleming, Mary Symon, Joan McMillin and Bob England.

The Greatest Raid of All **Dick Fulford**

In issue 22 of *In Touch* I gave an account of the raid on St Nazaire which took place in March 1942. (I must emphasise that I did not take part, otherwise I doubt if I would be writing this article!) But, remaining on this side of the Channel, I had good knowledge of the action and with the help of the 1956 book entitled "The Greatest Raid of All" I was able to write the 1999 article.

Thanks to the invention of the Internet, Dr Martin, a lady from Bristol, came across my article on the BBC People's War Web site. She was helping her 9-year-old son with his school project, "What did my Great Granddad do in the War". She left



Motor Gun Boat

a message on the web site asking the author (me) for more information and, having traced her, Tom Ashmore put her in touch with me. This resulted in interesting correspondence concerning her Granddad, Lieutenant Tom Boyd RNVR. He was the CO of ML160 and a hero of St Nazaire, whose boat was one of only three (of 16) which

1923 **83rd Anniversary** 2006 **Dinner**

Friday 24th March 2006



From left - Peter Wilson, our President; Clr. John Pierce, Chairman Harbourough District Council; Mrs Pierce; George Fleming, our Standard Bearer; Edward Garnier MP; Richard Foster, Leicestershire RBL Field Officer; Mark Hudson, our Chairman.

survived, and the only one which returned to Dartmouth, where I was stationed.

Tom Boyd was a "character", a "Jack the Lad" of the 1940s! But his bravery during the raid was recognised and he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. His Petty Officer coxswain was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal and his two Motor Mechanics the Distinguished Service Medal.

Dr Martin tells me that she is his eldest grandchild, but when her Granddad died in 1987 she was not too familiar with his exploits and knew little about the raid which, of course, had taken place 40-odd years beforehand. So I was able to recommend the book, and knowing it was long out of print I sent her my copy for her

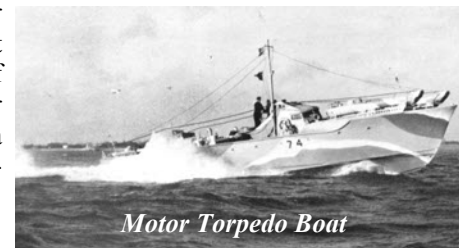


From left - Dick Fulford, Christopher, Marion and Peter Vine, Tom and Joan Ashmore Joy and Norman Banting.

young son to treasure. This of course was received with much pleasure and the few personal details I gave her of her Granddad she circulated to his numerous other grandchildren.

It's a small world; but isn't it satisfying to know that our RBL Branch can give pleasure to three generations of a previously unknown family?

In case a reminder is needed the St Nazaire Raid resulted in the destruction of the only Dry Dock able to house German capital ships, especially the Tirpitz. But sadly the cost was great; of the 611 sailors and commandos taking part 169 were killed, around 200 taken prisoner, and countless were wounded. Five Victoria Crosses were awarded which Admiral Louis Mountbatten said was "Surely by far the highest proportion of VCs ever awarded for a single operation".



Motor Torpedo Boat

However, Germany's capital ships were stopped from ever raiding Atlantic shipping which resulted years later in them being either destroyed or locked up in Norwegian waters.

Tom Boyd's bravery and that of the other 611 soldiers and sailors contributed to the eventual successful ending of WWII.